



REFUSING TO START PLAY



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Reference: Rules 78(a) & (e)

This question often arises: “*When, exactly, is a team guilty of refusing to start play*”?

In the case of a team **withdrawing from the ice** or failing to return to the ice after an intermission, the “refusing to start play” foul occurs at the point in time when it becomes apparent that the offending team’s players are not setting up for the face-off as a form of protest. Before this occurs, however, the referee would certainly have noticed that something was not right and would have inquired about the delay in lining up for the face-off. When the protest is confirmed by the referee, the Major + Game Misconduct* for delay of game are immediately assessed to the offending team’s head coach. The referee then formally orders the offending team to resume play and allows them 2 minutes to do so before considering whether or not to suspend the game.

When a player or team official is notified that they have received a Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct or Match penalty, the team is guilty of “refusing to start play” at the point in time when it becomes apparent to the referee that the offending person is **refusing to leave the bench or rink** as a form of protest. When the protest action is clearly recognizable by the referee, the Major + Game Misconduct* for delay of game are immediately assessed to the offending team’s head coach. The referee then formally orders the offending person to leave the bench or rink and allows that person 2 minutes to do so before considering whether or not to suspend the game.

In summary, the formal warning to resume play to avoid suspension of the game comes after the delay of game penalty is assessed.

* Note: If the refusing to start play foul occurs in the last 2 minutes of regular playing time or any time in overtime a Penalty Shot is also awarded to the non-offending team.